

**THUS SPAKE
SUBHAS**

“Regarding the future career of the Forward Bloc, we may confidently say that if it is the product of historical necessity, it will not die. If it has a philosophical justification, it will surely endure.” Netaji

TOWARDS SOCIALISM



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An election in which one-third of the electorate did not participate

The festival of democracy is over. The seven-phase election was concluded from April 19 to June 1. According to the Election Commission, 64.2 crore out of 98.1 crore voters have cast their votes in the 2024 elections. About 65.79 percent. This means that almost 34 crore people did not vote. An average of 35 per cent did not vote, which means thirty-five out of a hundred did not vote this time. The population of the United States is 34 crores and is the third most populous country in the world. In other words, almost as many voters as the population of the United States abstained from this election. In 2019, out of the total 91.19 crore registered voters, 61.47 crore voted. The average is 67.4 per cent. Compared to the last election, this time there is a decrease of almost two per cent.

Despite spending crores of rupees on campaigning by the Election Commission and political parties, why is it that one-third of the voters are still averse to this democratic process? The political parties, the Election Commission and the general society should set aside their prejudices and examine this fact.

The governance in our country is a good example of “Gerontocracy”. Gerontocracy is a system in

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which people who do not represent the majority of the country’s population rule the country. India is generally described as a country of youth. 50% of India’s population is below 25 years of age. About 65 per cent are below 35 years of age. But in Parliament, 94.1 per cent of MPs are above 35 years of age. See the table below.

Age	Representation in Parliament
25-30	1.5%
31-35	4.4%
35-40	6.3%
41-45	10.1%
46-50	13.6%
51-55	16.7%
56-60	14.9%
61-65	14.9%
66-70	12.3%
71-75	3.5%
Above 75	1.8%

(Source: Parliament Records)

Urban apathy and the lack of interest among the educated youth in the current political leadership

should be examined. In Bengaluru, known as the IT capital of India, the voter turnout in the 2013 assembly elections was 63 per cent, but it declined to 57 per cent in 2018 and 53 per cent in 2023 - a decrease of 10 per cent in ten years. The situation in other cities is no different. Except for Kolkata, the voting percentage is very low in all other major cities. Hyderabad – 44.84%, Mumbai South 51%, Pune -49.89%, New Delhi – 56.87%, Chennai Central – 53.91%. A large percentage of young people add their name to the voter list only to acquire voter ID Cards, Aadhaar Card, Driving License and Passport.

Growing corruption is one of the reasons for disenchantment with politics. It is natural for those who look on in amazement at the confiscation of currency notes and gold jewellery worth crores of rupees from the toilets and bedrooms of the houses of ministers and MPs, to feel disgusted with politics. After studying and passing exams, how can people who are forced to pay bribes for a job have faith in politics? It’s a wonder if the entire system doesn’t feel resentful when exam question

on page 2...

Mandate to protect the Constitution

In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the people gave a decisive verdict calling for the protection of the Constitution of India and its guaranteed democratic rights and values such as secularism, socialism and cooperative federalism. The unassailable aura of invincibility built around Modi has been abruptly shattered.

The elections were held against the backdrop of an unparalleled socio-economic crisis, with high levels of inequality, unemployment, and

inflation.

The election result was a heavy blow to Prime Minister Narendra Modi who faced the election boasting that he would win more than 400 (Ab ki baar 400 paar) seats this time. Not only they failed terribly to get four hundred seats, but the people did not even grant Narendra Modi and his party the majority to rule alone. The BJP’s seats have come down from 303 in 2019 to 240 in 2024, which is a reduction of 21%. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) got 292 seats while the

opposition INDIA bloc got 234 seats. The BJP got 36.56% of the votes while the NDA led by them managed to get around 42%. At the same time, the opposition coalition INDIA bloc managed to get more than 36% votes.

During the election, common people were worried that if the BJP won a majority on its own and the NDA alliance secured more than 400 seats, there could be a possibility of the Indian constitution being rewritten and rights such as reservation being abolished. This

suspicion was strengthened by the official attempts to change the name India and rebrand it as Bharat.

During the past ten years of BJP rule, India has witnessed an alarming erosion of rights and democratic freedoms. India’s political system has been changed from the status of an electoral democracy to an electoral autocracy.

At the same time, the political crisis has been constantly worsening. Over the last decade, Indians have helplessly witnessed the imprisonment of civil society activists, journalists, students,

and other dissidents. There has been a process of institutional capture by the BJP alongside the spread of hate speech, violence against Muslim and Christian minorities, and the suppression of all forms of political opposition.

The standard of parliamentary processes also reached an unprecedented low, with the entire budget passed without debate and the bulk of bills passed without a recorded vote. The investigating agencies and other

on page 6...

Editorial

The recently concluded General Lok Sabha election reflects the mandate to the constitution of India, rejection of the Modi ki guarantee and tamed the autocratic and arbitrary pattern of governance of Mr Modi. But Mr Modi has turned his role as the champion of the inclusive democracy. He pays respect to the Constitution of India during the NDA Parliamentary Party meeting at Samvidhan Sadan in New Delhi. He touched a copy of the Constitution of India, kept in the central hall of Parliament, with his forehead. Mr Modi expressed his unwavering dedication to the Principles enshrined in the Constitution, which he said gives crores of people hope, strength and dignity. He continued: "Every moment of my life is dedicated to upholding the noble values enshrined in the Constitution of India given to us by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. It is only due to the Constitution that a person like me, born into poverty and in a backward family, is able to serve the nation. It is different Modi, as we have seen him continuously ignoring, violating and undermining the Constitution and its set provisions and norms.

Remember his rise to the chief ministership of Gujarat. Then, he was the CM of Gujarat, which means the CM of every citizen of Gujrat. He had taken the oath of the Constitution, and his inaction during the crucial moments of the Gujarat riots

Constitutional Morality: A big question on PM

was unethical and against the spirit of the Constitution and democracy. He had not performed his 'Raj dharma'. The sharp and inhuman divide between Hindus and Muslims is his main instrument of politics, and his rise to national politics with immense corporate support has turned the scenario of national politics solely based on caste and religion polarization mechanisms. For a single moment, he is unsuitable for our parliamentary system based on a multiparty system, and he has made a big loss to the social and cultural fabric of our society and ruined the nation's economy and dignity in the past ten years. As an extra-authority and unconstitutional leader, he had taken the decision of demonetization alone, which was a disastrous step taken by him. He openly violated the set provisions and norms of our parliamentary system again and again. He always opposed the multiparty system critical to regional parties and was always eager to swallow them. A few months before, we saw the suspension of 151 members of Parliament, and then comfortably, the Modi government amended CrPC.

From the BJP-centric to Modi-centric non-democratic political attitude, this time, only 240 BJP tally has changed Mr Modi's tone, and he is using NDA government terminology and talking about balancing regional aspirations and national interest. In our parliamentary system, the PM is the only head of the Council of Ministers and has to act as

per Article 74 of the Constitution. However, Mr Modi had a different attitude and still has an unconstitutional way of functioning as without seeking floor test, he sanctioned the 17th instalment of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi. The first cabinet, which met without the allocation of portfolios, took the decision 'to assist three crore additional rural and urban households for the Construction of houses under PM Awas yojana. Without reconstituting the Cabinet Committee, after the formation of the new government, PM Modi extended the tenures of the National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and P.K. Mishra as the Principal Secretary to the PM.

Mr Modi's two earlier tenures had shown complete negation of the cabinet system and collective responsibility to the President and Parliament. The more and more power-centric PMO has finished the concept of responsibility. He did not show any urgency in solving the burning Manipur, Kashmir, and unemployment problems.

Mr Modi, in his election campaign, violated the model code and tried his best to polarise Hindu votes. He used words from Mangalsutra to Muzra. This is living proof of his disregard for constitutional morality. Secularism is the core value of our society and the Constitution, and he always engages his oratory power to crush this Secularism.

We have to wait and watch Mr Modi. He has to adhere to Constitutional morality and the balance required to run the coalition government in true spirit and light of the Constitution.

An election in which one-third of the...

from page 7...

papers are leaked and results are rigged. Increasing privatization of public wealth and thereby subversion of reservation benefits, severe labour exploitation by the private sector, contract labour in all sectors and no job security are the reasons for spreading frustration among the youth.

The images that emerge during the sessions of Parliament and Legislatures are enough to make one feel disgusted with the current system.

The primary lesson of democracy will be undermined if important laws are passed without any discussion after suspending one-third of the MPs in the parliament and expelling them from the house. This happens when the voices of the

opposition are not taken into account. When the public sees regular disruptions in the assemblies and Parliament and the destruction of public properties due to personal recriminations instead of legislative debates, their anger towards the system will turn into hatred.

Contrary to usual, the Election Commission has also come under criticism this time. The indifference adopted by the commission and allegations of bias in some of the decisions taken have cast doubt on the commission. The Commission, which did not release the total number of voters and the number of people who voted in the constituencies, only released the percentage of those who voted after days and did not give a satisfactory answer to any of the questions raised by

the opposition. The commission pretended not to see the campaign on caste and religion and the widespread use of religious symbols in the elections. In 2019, the commission held press conferences after each phase of elections and interacted directly with the public. But this time, after the election announcement, the Commission only met with the media the day before the counting. It cannot be blamed if one suspects that this was a strategic escape from uncomfortable questions. The commission has not been able to completely remove the widespread complaints and doubts raised regarding the electronic voting machines. Making huge advertisements involving sports personalities like Sachin is not enough, the common man should also

feel that the Umpire is fair and unbiased. People would hesitate to support a system where there is doubt.

A large majority of expatriates and migrant workers want to vote but are unable to do so under the current system. They cannot vote even if their name is on the voter list. With the help of modern technology, they too should be allowed to participate in the festival of democracy. The Supreme Court had asked the Election Commission to set up a system so that expatriates can vote in the country where they are working. But nothing happened.

Seventy-seven years after independence, many fundamental issues remain unresolved. Poverty, unemployment, homelessness and lack of medical facilities are still the subjects of

attractive election promises. The governments that have ruled the country have not even been able to provide drinking water to everyone. While the public wealth of the country accumulates in the hands of a few powerful people, the vast majority struggle to make ends meet. How can people believe in politics if the very people who prepared the manifestos openly shout that these are just fraud? (Jhumla)

Vote is the greatest weapon of democracy. Exercising it is essential for the survival of democracy. But a general sense of hopelessness that this will happen no matter who you vote for will depoliticize society. A depoliticized society will quickly give way to totalitarianism. Then ringing is the death knell of democracy.

INDIAN MUSLIMS' UNDER-REPRESENTATION IN 2024 ELECTIONS

The results of 2024 general elections in India have yet again proved that the common voter is the ultimate kingmaker, one who believes in democracy (lok tantra) and is not easily hoodwinked by the system/machinations (tantra). Further 67% Indian voters are still secular, but were browbeaten to take a back seat due to the high decibel campaigns by the Hindutva forces to silence and intimidate them.

The confidence with which the BJP's top brass in the country led by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi plunged into the electoral fray in 2024, belied its expectations, finally, and many say saved the country from falling further into an abyss of intolerance and majoritarianism.

In spite of a servile media, which throughout the election campaign became the mouthpiece of the ruling party, and which, once the process had ended, predicted more than 400 seats for the BJP, as per Modi's slogan 'Ab ki baar 400 paar' had to eat a humble pie when the real election results started to come.

To say that BJP had no inkling of the coming fate would also be a mistake. This is evident by the fact that immediately after the first phase of the electoral process PM Modi immediately changed track and resorted to his old way of sowing the seeds of communalism through his speeches, targeting the Muslims in his speeches, crying and even claiming himself to be a demi-god. However, all his pranks fell to the ground, as the election results proved.

Additionally, what is more interesting here would be to analyse the factors, which were responsible for BJP's defeat, and which in fact will also prove the role played by the Muslims in the elections of 2024.

In 2024, 78 Muslim candidates were in the fray, fielded by different political parties, out of them 24 Muslim candidates won the polls or a share of

4.42% in the parliament. In the 2019 elections, 115 Muslim candidates had contested and 26 won last time. That means the current Lok Sabha will have two less Muslim MPs. The only time when the percentage of Muslim MPs in the parliament was near two digits was in the 1980 elections, with 49 Muslim MPs securing 9.04% of the MPs' representation in the Parliament.

There are only 15 Muslim-majority Lok Sabha constituencies, and in further 8 Muslims are in a dominant position, bringing the number of Muslim-influenced constituencies to just 23. In these 15 constituencies, the BJP had nominated Muslim candidates in six (two more than in 2014) and the Congress in nine (three more than in 2014).

This year, the BSP fielded 35 Muslim candidates, the highest among all political parties. The Congress came next, with 19 Muslim candidates, while the TMC had the third highest number of Muslim candidates in the fray this time. The Samajwadi Party (SP) fielded just four Muslim candidates, three contested from UP, while the fourth was fielded from Andhra Pradesh.

The maximum Muslim candidates contested in UP (22), followed by West Bengal (17), Bihar (seven), Kerala (six) and Madhya Pradesh (four). Assam, among the highest in terms of share of Muslims in the population, had three Muslim candidates, down from four last time.

One reason for the increasing number of Muslim candidates winning in 2024 was the INDIA alliance. In the last elections, Muslims generally voted for the Samajwadi Party or the Congress. So, in the 2019 Lok Sabha, the Muslim votes were divided between Congress and the SP, as they contested separately. But this time the SP and the Congress remained together, so we can say that the Muslim votes remained consolidated.

The diminishing number of Muslim legislators could be attributed to the fact that most Opposition parties shied away from giving tickets to Muslim candidates, fearing a polarising contest since the BJP's advent to power. This accounts for under 5% of the strength of the Lok Sabha, much lower than the overall population of Muslims in India, which stood at 14% in 2011 census.

The reasons for the anti-Muslim consolidation in 2024 can be found in the consecration of the Ram temple and the dominance of the Hindutva narrative in all spheres. At the policy level, there were apprehensions about the Modi government's moves on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC): many viewed these as government tools to isolate the community. Additionally, inter-community relations deteriorated further with

increasing incidents of lynching occurring with impunity.

However, though one may sound happy that so many Muslim candidates won, but this moment also offers an opportunity to the so-called Muslim religious, political and social leaders and even common Muslims to pause and reflect, on whether the BJP's loss is their victory or not. Besides going into the more obvious question of BJP's abhorrence to the Muslims, both as the party's candidates and electorates, the results should make us think where the Indian Muslims are standing 77 years after the independence.

Have they been successful politically, economically, educationally or socially or have they gone down the ladder, looking for affirmative actions from the successive governments but as a community, not doing enough on their own to achieve

success.

Though, by and large Indian Muslims have since 1947 hitched their wagon to the secular parties, yet they have not been able to form a political party of their own with an all-India presence and acceptability. What should be construed as the reason behind this lackadaisical approach? A lack of desire or an inability on their part?

Well, recently a video surfaced on X, showing a leader of Muslim Ulema saying that he does not endorse Indian Muslims' desire to support a Muslim political leader. In fact it is religious leaders like them who have always betrayed the Muslim community and have always sabotaged any plans by Indian Muslims to rise politically and this results in poor representation of Muslims in the parliament.

(By Asad Mirza, Political & International Commentator. Courtesy: Nagaland Times)

The United States has to take Cuba, once and for all, out of the list of states allegedly sponsoring terrorism

(Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba)

According to U.S. official media reports, on 15 May 2024, the country's State Secretary submitted to the Congress one more of the arbitrary reports that normally describe countries without any international mandate or recognition. This time, he listed four countries who allegedly "do not fully cooperate with the United States antiterrorist efforts for the 2023 calendar year." As opposed to what has happened in recent years, the list does not slanderously include Cuba among such countries.

Nonetheless, the State Department keeps Cuba as one of the States in a list of those allegedly "sponsoring" terrorism. It is nothing but a totally unilateral and

unfounded list, whose sole purpose is to smear sovereign States and serve as a pretext for imposing coercive economic sanctions on them, as those ruthlessly imposed on Cuba.

The demand for the United States government to amend such an injustice continues to be firmly and repeatedly made not only by the Cuban people and many governments, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, but also by political, social and religious organizations in the United States itself and by several U.S. politicians.

The clear and absolute truth is that Cuba does not sponsor terrorism, but it has been a victim of it instead, including State terrorism. This is a question that can be confirmed by anyone interested in the topic and that

is very well-known by the government of the United States, its State Department and its intelligence and law enforcement agencies. They are also fully aware of how significantly harmful are for the Cuban economy the sanctions, actions and the intimidating effect that automatically have on any State having it included in such a list, regardless of what the truth might be.

It is not enough to acknowledge that Cuba fully cooperates with the United States. Cuba does so with the entire international community as well. That is a widely known fact and public opinion is not to be misled about it. The President of the United States has all the privileges to act honestly and to do what is right.

Havana, 15 May 2024. (Cubaminrex)

THE WORLD'S FIRST 'EXIT POLL STOCK MARKET SCAM'

On 31 May, there was sudden frenetic activity in India's stock markets. The value of shares bought and sold on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) doubled from the previous day. Such an enormous spike in shares trading on one day is very rare, even when there may be a big, surprising news or development. For example, on 12 March 2020, when the World Health Organisation, declared the coronavirus outbreak as a global pandemic, stock market activity rose 22% from the previous day, but even then, it did not double. Stock market trading activity last doubled on 16 May, 2014, when election results were declared and Narendra Modi had won with an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha, a first in three decades, which was a huge surprise then.

So, the curious question is— what was the absolutely surprising news or development on 31 May, 2024, for stock market activity to have doubled? Nothing. Only, that it was the day before the final phase of polling, a detail that was known beforehand. There was no big news to explain the massive increase in stock market trading on 31 May. Then, who were the people indulging in such intense trading for no apparent reason? While specific investor details are private information and unavailable, the NSE publishes stock market activity by investor category— retail investors (common people), domestic institutional investors like Indian mutual funds, and foreign investors. Turns out that it was foreign investors who accounted for 58% of

all the buying of shares on that day. This was surprising because on every day in the prior week, foreign investors were not buying in such large proportions and were net sellers. It is then intriguing that on 31 May, when there was no big news development, a group of foreign investors suddenly turned bullish on India and decided to indulge in massive buying of shares. This mysterious share-buying activity by a group of foreign investors can only be explained by what happened the next day.

The exit polls were released the next day and, magically, every single exit poll predicted an absolute landslide for the BJP alliance, some with even 400 seats, the first in four decades. But then, how did stock market activity double the day before these exit polls were released when, presumably, only the pollsters and their media organisations were aware of the predictions and those had not been made public yet? Surely, it cannot be a mere coincidence that an extremely rare event like doubling of stock market trading happened exactly one day before multiple exit polls unanimously projected an enormous victory for Modi! When the stock market reopened on 3 June, after the weekend, it rose to an all-time high, driven by the exit polls' prediction of a third term for Modi with an untrammelled majority. Evidently, the group of foreign investors who suddenly bought huge amounts of shares on 31 May, saw their value rise enormously. On 4 June, when the actual results were being declared, it became clear that every single exit poll was way off,

and Modi was struggling to get even a simple majority. The stock market panicked and crashed. It lost Rs 30 lakh crore in value just on counting day, the highest fall ever in its history. By which time, the foreign investors had sold their shares and made massive profits. The vast majority of retail investors (common people) saw their share value decline, and suffered huge losses.

This is just the simpler side of the story. The other, more technically complex, side to this saga is that there was also enormous profiteering through speculation in the stock markets using share derivatives, through which investors can profit from both the rise and the fall in the stock markets. These derivatives investors gain the most when there is tremendous volatility, which is exactly what the Indian stock markets experienced between exit polls and actual results. Data shows there was huge trading in derivatives, too, between 31 May and 4 June.

Had the exit polls not predicted a massive victory for the BJP, the stock market

would not have jumped so high on 3 June, and consequently not fallen so steeply on 4 June. It was the exit polls that induced this desired volatility for derivatives investors. Was this done wittingly or unwittingly, is the Rs 30 lakh crore question.

In sum, it is crystal clear through data that there was suspicious and mysterious stock market activity around exit polls and election results by which a group of foreign investors gained, and millions of Indian small investors lost wealth.

The corollary presumption to these intriguing stock market activities is that a certain group of investors had access to the exit poll predictions prior to them being made public, and profited from this 'inside (mis)information'. This is a punishable crime under securities laws, and in most countries, this would be seriously investigated with alacrity. Some of the obvious questions that come to mind are:

1. Who are these foreign investors that pumped in huge sums of money into

India's stock markets on 31 May?

2. Did they act on material, non-public, inside information of the exit polls to profit from them?

3. What is their relationship to the exit pollsters or the media organisations involved?

4. Whose money or on whose behalf were these investors investing?

5. How much did these investors profit in just these two days of trading?

On October 9, 2021, the then Chancellor of Austria was forced to resign in a unique scandal. He had rigged opinion polls in his favour, forced the media to show these surveys, and won his election. Indian pollsters may have done even better. From the chronology of events and stock market data, one can easily impute that not only were exit polls weaponised to influence election outcomes but to also profit using the stock markets. India may have witnessed the world's first "Exit Poll Stock Market Scam"!

(By Praveen Chakravarty - Courtesy Decan Herald -)

Votes Secured by AIFB Candidates in the Legislative Assembly Elections of Odisha

No	Name of the Assembly Constituency	Name of the Candidate	Votes Secured
1	Chikiti	Com. Bibhudhendra Padhi	371
2	Berhampur	Com. Samim Begam	120
3	Gopalpur	Com. Kumari Mamata	265
4	Dighapahandi	Com. Pintu Pradhan	549
5	Paralakhemundi	Com. P. Muralikrishna	429
6	Jaypore	Com. B. Hari Rao	516
7	Dharmagarh	Com. Tankadha Sabar	1477
8	Lanjigarh	Com. Udhaba Nayak	1629
9	Narla	Com. (Dr.) Sibaram Nayak	521
10	Koraput	Com. Dhanurjay Hantal	504
11	Bhanjanagar	Com. Raju Nayak	659
12	Bhubaneswar Central	Com. Laxmi Dora	91
13	Ekamra Bhubaneswar	Com. Santosh Kumar Jati	102
14	Kantabanji	Com. Abhiram Dharua	1217
15	Patanagarh	Com. Caitanya Bag	1169
16	Talcher	Com. Manoj Kumar Jena	162
17	Nimapara	Com. Jitendriya Behera	158
18	Kakatpur	Com. Rabindra Nath Kandi	129

Mexicans Elect Pro-Worker Progressive Sheinbaum as President in Landslide

In a historic election, Mexican voters elected pro-worker, progressive candidate Claudia Sheinbaum, the first-ever woman and first-ever Jewish person as president for a six-year term.

“We women have landed in the presidency,” Sheinbaum declared in her victory speech. “But we are going to govern for everyone.

“For the first time in 200 years of the republic, I will become the first female president of Mexico. And as I have said on other occasions, I do not arrive alone. We all arrived, with our heroines who gave us our

homeland, with our ancestors, our mothers, our daughters and our granddaughters.”

Sheinbaum is an ally of outgoing President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, called AMLO and the nominee of his Morena Party. She will be Mexico’s first woman president and first Jewish president, in a largely Roman Catholic nation. She takes office on October 1. Mexican presidents may serve only one term.

FIRST NOBEL PRIZE WINNER

She’ll also be Mexico’s first past Nobel Prize-Winning

president, sharing the award with colleagues on a United Nations climate panel that investigated and publicized the accelerating of global warming. Sheinbaum holds a PhD in energy engineering from Mexico’s leading university.

While Sheinbaum’s top task will be battling criminal cartels and yawning income inequality—including a huge gender gap there, the former Mexico City Mayor, who was also a member of AMLO’s cabinet, may have to solve another problem: What to do about Donald Trump.

Not only is the presumed Republican US presidential nominee anti-Mexican, anti-immigrant and anti-people of colour, but he’s also now a convicted felon. And even if he wins in the US in November, Mexican law bars felons from entering without a presidential waiver, regardless of where their appeals are in the courts. Other nations with felon bans include Canada and the United Kingdom.

Unofficial tallies from Mexico’s national elections commission show Sheinbaum not won by a two-to-one margin over her closest competitor, Xochitl Galvez, in a two-woman-two-man race, but brought in a Morena majority in the Mexican House of Representatives and came close to a majority in the Senate.

In her victory speech, Sheinbaum praised AMLO and promised to continue many of his policies, while concentrating on reducing Mexico’s yawning income inequality. Mexico’s corporate class, many of whom liked to the cartels, reacted to the landslide for Sheinbaum and Morena with a slight decline in stock market averages.

Sheinbaum promised to combat the cartels by “building a strategy of addressing the causes and continue moving toward zero impunity” for cartel felons.

And Mexican income inequality also reflects gender and class inequality in its workforce. Domestic workers face harsh conditions and mounting violence on the job. Feminist

groups in Mexican states—which are still dominated by male politicians—must keep fighting for abortion access and sexual and reproductive rights. And the murder rate targeting women has risen.

One of AMLO’s first actions on taking office was to double Mexico’s minimum wage. Other included instituting better old-age pensions and providing college scholarships and other incentives to keep young people out of the criminal cartels. And he dissolved the notoriously corrupt National police, handing law enforcement over to the armed forces.

Sheinbaum will also have to deal with the impact and after-effects of the US crackdown in migration at their common border. Biden has already been implementing many of the anti-immigrant policies pushed by Trump when he was president. Biden produced a new border protection plan on June 4. It features almost automatic rejection of all asylum seekers and forces other migrants to remain in camps south of the border, in northern Mexico.

Trump says he would deport all 10 to 11 million undocumented people in the US, after first rounding them up and throwing them into prison camps. He calls foreign migrants criminals and rapists, and promises to shut the border and ban Muslims and people from what he calls “shithole countries” from entering. Migrants from countries Trump lambasts, including Mexicans, are most often people of colour.

(Courtesy: People’s World)

Votes Secured by AIFB Candidates in the Legislative Assembly Elections of Andhra Pradesh

No	Name of the Assembly Constituency	Name of the Candidate	Votes Secured
1	Kaikaluru	Com. L. Veera Sivaji	213
2	Rajampet	Com. K. Subbamma	695
3	Bhimavaram	Com. Srinivas Raju	221
4	Pulivendula	Com. Karna Ramesh Kumar Reddy	146
5	Badvel	Com. Singamala Venkateshwarlu	64
6	Gopalapuram	Com. Bathula Venu	206
7	Gannavaram	Com. Dondapati Anand Prasad	256
8	Proddutur	Com. P. Bangarumuni Reddy	43
9	Mydukur	Com. Avutala Rajeswara Reddy	53
10	Anantapur	Com. K. Surya Shekhar Reddy	116
11	Panyam	Com. Battula Chinchaya	153
12	Mummidivaram	Com. Pemmadi Swami	107
13	Undi	Com. Vetukuri Sivaramaraju	13260 (Third Position)
14	Nedatholu	Com. Kasturi Sathyaprasad	1691

Votes Secured by AIFB Candidates in the Lok Sabha Election 2024

			Siva Narasimha Rao	
3		3. Kadappa	Com. Anki Reddy Suresh Kumar Reddy	755
4		4. Nellore	Com. Shaik Shafi Ahmed	1037
5		5. Rajampet*	Com. Penumadu Pradeep	5672
6		6. Nandyala	Com. Govardhan	642
7	Telangana	1. Zahirabad	Com. Gurrapu Machander	1769
8		2. Mahabubabad	Com. Arun Kumar Mypathi	39136 (4 th Position)
9		3. Chevella	Com. Konda Vishweshwar Reddy	3748
10	Maharashtra	1. Madha	Com. Aware Siddheshwar Bharat	3067
11		2. Hatkanangale	Com. Dinkarrao Tulshidas Chavan	679
12		3. Nagpur	Com. Santosh Lanjewar	567
13		4. Amravati	Com. Bhaurao Wankade	329
14		5. Wardha	Com. Ramrao Bajirao Dodaskar	1438
15		6. Maval	Com. Shivajirao Jadhav	1676
16		7. Mumbai North-East	Com. Surendra Sibag	678
17		8. Dhule	Com. Shivaji Patil	1001
18	Madhya Pradesh	1. Khajuraho	Com. R.B. Prajapati (IAS Rtd.)	50215 (3 rd Position)
19	Bihar	1. Purnia	Com. Kishore Kumar Yadav	6854
20		2. Patliputra	Com. Madhuri Kumari	1302
21	Jammu & Kashmir	1. Jammu	Com. Zaheer Abbas Bhatti	984
22		2. Anantnag-Rajouri	Com. Javed Ahmed Choudhary	1562
23	Odisha	1. Berhampur	Com. Santosh Kumar Sahu	2291
24	West Bengal	1. Cooch Behar	Com. Nitish Chandra Rai	30267 (3 rd Position)
25		2. Purulia	Com. Dharendra Nath Mahato	14572
26		3. Barasat	Com. Sanjib Chatterjee	100000 (4 th Position)
27	Uttar Pradesh	1. Kanpur	Com. Prashast Dheer	465
28		2. Kannauj	Com. Subhash Chandra Dohare	801
29		3. Bhadohi	Com. Sushil	5261
30		4. Mirzapur	Com. Sameer Singh Patel	3487
31		5. Basti	Com. Hafiz Ali	2988
32	Delhi	1. West Delhi	Com. Charanjeet Singh	619
33		2. South Delhi	Com. (Dr.) Goutham Anand	540

Mandate to protect the...

from page 7...

institutions were mostly (mis)used to target opposition leaders and promote the breakup of rival parties.

The farmers, workers, youth, and student women's movements that have been ongoing in the country for the past several years have significantly impacted the outcome of this election. In areas where these movements have been strong, the BJP and its allies have lost a significant number of seats. The role played by the mass organizations of the left parties to coordinate and strengthen such struggles is highly praiseworthy.

The working class, whose efforts generate the GDP, is deeply resentful due to the impact of inflation, the privatization of public assets, widening inequality and anti-labour policy approaches of the government.

Rising unemployment and youth migration abroad have led to growing anti-government sentiment among the young generation, regardless of urban-rural distinction.

According to data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), India has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world, at 45.4 per cent. The general unemployment rate is 8 per cent, which may not account for numerous types of under-employment and disguised unemployment in a country where nearly 94 per cent of the workforce is employed in the informal sector.

People rejected the election campaign of the Prime Minister and other BJP leaders aimed at religious sectarianism. The construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, which was highlighted as the main achievement of the Modi government, and the polarization of the Hindu votes aimed at it, were mercilessly rejected by the people. This is evidenced by the resounding defeat of the BJP candidate in Faizabad in Uttar Pradesh, which includes Ayodhya, and the huge reduction in Narendra Modi's majority in Varanasi.

The Election Commission of India, which is supposed to act as a watchdog, has shown troubling behaviour. Recent reports reveal that the ECI deliberately chose not to act against Modi for hate speech, especially after his infamous speech in Banswara, Rajasthan, in which he called Muslim citizens "infiltrators." The ECI did nothing about this and other instances of hate speech, raising serious doubts about its reputation as a neutral arbiter.

The All India Forward Bloc believes that if the INDIA bloc, the opposition group formed against the BJP, had maintained the enthusiasm and unity shown in the beginning, the election result would have been different.

The freezing of the decision to hold mass rallies in major cities of the country under the auspices of the INDIA bloc and the refusal of influential regional parties to recognize smaller parties seriously affected the unity of the Indian Front. Nitish Kumar, who took the initiative to shape the India front, jumped on the other side at a critical moment. And Mamata Banerjee's fluctuating comments about whether her party would remain or not in the INDIA bloc and unnecessary statements made by some Congress leaders also created the impression that there was a lack of unity in the INDIA bloc. In many places, the grassroots level leaders of the INDIA bloc have failed to give the confidence to the people that the opposition front can defeat the candidates of the BJP and Sangh Parivar.

(Resolution adopted in the CC of AIFB held on 19-20 June 2024)

SO, WHAT HAPPENS TO HINDUTVA NOW?

It is not easy to undo deep polarisation introduced into society due to organised hatred.

The failure of Bharatiya Janata Party to get past the 272 majority mark has brought back the National Democratic Alliance into the forefront. While Atal Bihari Vajpayee came to power and led the NDA government in 1998, there was a strong imprint of the BJP's politics in the government. Among other things which were part of the Hindutva agenda that time was the appointment of the Venkatchaliah Commission to review the constitution, and the saffronisation of the textbooks and introduction of courses in astrology and *Paurohitya* (rituals) in the curriculum.

Twice, in 2014 and 2019, Modi came to power as the NDA but as BJP on its own had an overwhelming majority the other components of the government were on a 'silent mode' and BJP aggressively launched its Hindu nationalist agenda, which included the building of the Ram Temple and the reading down of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. In addition, people who were referred to as "fringe elements" killed Muslims and Dalits on the pretext of beef and gave the bogey of "love jihad" a free hand, enjoying impunity from the state.

The other authoritarian streaks

of Modi government, including the subordination of constitutional institutions, gained prominence, along with the conversion of mainstream media into 'Godi' media. All this woke the opposition to up and come together as INDIA. Despite this formation coming into being, Modi and the BJP centred their election propaganda around an anti-Muslim rhetoric. The campaign began with calling the Congress manifesto an imprint of the Muslim League. Most other slogans and promises of Congress were turned into something anti-Hindu and intended solely for Muslims. The prime minister called Muslims *ghuspathiye* (infiltrators) and a community that "had more children". Modi's propaganda reached a new low when he said Congress will do *mujra* (a dance which emerged during Mughal rule) for them. The system has been so tuned that names of many Muslims did not find place in electoral rolls, and at election booths, many Muslims were turned away by the police. Muslims have been effectively turned into second-class citizens and have been made politically invisible. All this intensifies the prevalent hate against this hapless community.

As the BJP failed to reach the propagated "400 paar" for NDA and more than 370 for BJP, there was a big sigh of

relief in the community. As the results came and Modi declared himself the next prime minister, he toned down his language to recall "*sarva dharma sambhav* (equal respect for all religions)." That this was peak hypocrisy in the light of what happened to minorities during the last 10 years does not bear mention. What is in store for minorities in the times to come?

The impunity enjoyed by fringe elements may be slightly curtailed. This, though, is a big *if* as they are well-rooted in the system. Whether allies like Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu will be able to raise their voice against this scattered anti-Muslim violence is yet to be seen. How effective they can be against the strong-arm tactics of the Modi party, only time will tell. The hate spread by the Hindutva movement is so widespread that it may not be easy to curtail it.

It is likely that the third pillar of Hindutva politics, the Uniform Civil Code, may be deferred. The Citizenship Amendment Act, which discriminates against Muslims, is like a hanging sword and time alone will tell us how much pressure the BJP will put to implement it. Surely after the remarkable Shaheen Bagh movement, BJP will not insist on it unless they feel that they can bulldoze their way despite the Naidu and Nitish, who are more tactical in these

matters. Note that Naidu has not moved from his 'reservation for Muslims' plank.

The other major issue of caste census, to which BJP is opposed, may have to be rethought as it was Nitish as chief minister of Bihar, who initiated this. There is a strong national sentiment for it and there are few buyers for Modi's propaganda that the INDIA alliance will remove the reservations for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Other Backward Classes and give it to Muslims.

What can we expect about Muslims' social, political and economic conditions? The hate spread against this community by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and BJP combine has sunk deep into social thinking. Anti-Muslim thinking has become part of the perception of a large section of the society. The consistent work of the RSS and BJP is made easier by changes in textbooks, the role of media, and the word of mouth. These myths and misconceptions are the solid pillars on which hate is constructed, and violence and subsequent polarisation brought in. While the role of RSS in 2024 elections needs further analysis, it is their machinations which keep the hate against Muslims and Christians alive. Interestingly the number of RSS shakhas

during Modi rule has more than doubled. In a state like Odisha where the Kandhamal violence took place and Pastor Stains was burnt alive, the BJP is now in power again. While in Kerala, BJP did win over a section of Christians for various reasons, nationally Christians too are a target of Hindu nationalist politics, as seen by the rising sub-radar attacks on prayer meetings of Christians. All said and done, the marginalisation of Muslims will continue. It is not easy to undo the deep polarisation introduced into society due to the work done by this organisation. What RSS has been doing was well diagnosed by our first home minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel when he wrote after banning RSS in 1948, "All their speeches were full of communal poison, as a result of the poison the country had to suffer the sacrifice of invaluable life of Gandhiji". This aspect of our political life was not curtailed and it grew into a multi-headed hydra using every opportunity to intensify the religious division of the society. We cannot build the India of the dreams of our freedom fighters without undoing the massive hate which grips social understanding.

(By Ram Puniyani. He is the president of the Centre for Study of Society and Secularism.)

IN 140+ LS SEATS, MORE EVM VOTES WERE...

from page 8...

bigger than the deficits. So, some may think that a recount is not warranted. The UP CEO has said that when the margin is smaller than the deficit then you can have a recount. But, as the deficit is 50% of the margin (in three of these cases), it can be considered significant and is important as it reflects on the integrity of the entire process. There is a view that candidates who lost from these seats and other seats where the winning margin

was very low should demand a 100% votes count. If the EVMs malfunctioned or if there was a clerical error committed by the presiding officer then the VVPAT slips should be counted.

Despite the Uttar Pradesh chief electoral officer's comments on deficits in the number of votes counted, other serious questions need answering:

1. How could the EC explain surplus votes counted, i.e., more votes counted than were cast?
2. Why is the EC not giving

parliamentary constituency-wise clarifications on the deficit or surplus EVM votes counted rather than making a generic statement?

3. How did he come to the conclusion that the difference between votes polled and counted is due to the non-deletion of mock poll data?

4. Is the EC accepting that there were discrepancies in the number of votes polled as mentioned in Forms 17C and the number of votes recorded in control units in some PCs?

5. On average, one EVM records 700 to 800 votes per

polling booth. Then why is the number of deficit votes in some PCs as low as 20-30 votes?

6. Why didn't the EC count all EVM votes polled and, if needed, the VVPAT slips in places where the winning margin was very slim?

7. Will the EC inform the public about how many EVMs were set aside and why?

The EC's integrity touched its nadir during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, especially when it showed reluctance in sharing the absolute number

of votes polled.

I have asked the EC about the discrepancy between the number of EVM votes polled and the number of EVM votes counted through email and X (formerly known as Twitter), but have yet to receive a response. This article will be updated as and when the EC replies.

(By Poonam Agarwal. Poonam Agarwal is a senior independent journalist, advocate and founder of the ExplainX YouTube channel. - Courtesy 'The Wire')

IN 140+ LS SEATS, MORE EVM VOTES WERE COUNTED THAN EVM VOTES POLLED. WHAT'S GOING ON?

In some cases the number of EVM votes counted is less than the number of EVM votes polled. While there has been an official explanation for why this may be, the 'deficit' in some cases is around half the victory margin in the respective seats.

New Delhi: Results for the Lok Sabha 2024 elections are out, but the controversy around the election process persists.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, I first reported at *The Quint* on the discrepancies found between the data for the EVM votes polled and EVM votes counted.

The matter was also heard in the Supreme Court five years later in 2024, based on a petition filed by the Association for Democratic Reform in 2019.

During the hearing, the Election Commission (EC) rejected all claims of discrepancies found in multiple parliamentary constituencies (PCs) during the 2019 elections, saying the petitioners and the media had considered data on the approximate number of votes polled published on the Election Commission's App, and that was why their data did not match with the actual number of votes counted.

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections data shows discrepancies in almost all PCs. A close look at EC data from 543 PCs shows that except for a few PCs like

Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep and Attingal in Kerala, the number of EVM votes counted differs from that of EVM votes polled.

In more than 140 PCs, the number of EVM votes counted surpassed the number of EVM votes polled. The difference ranged between two votes in one case and 3,811 votes in another.

There are also cases of fewer votes than those that claimed to have been polled, being counted eventually. In those PCs where the number of EVM votes counted was less than the number of EVM votes polled, the highest difference was -16,791 votes.

Here are the top three PCs where a surplus of EVM votes were counted.

The EC has mentioned the number of EVM votes counted and the number of postal votes counted separately. (See the website of ECI)

Moreover, the EC released the absolute number of EVM votes polled in the 2024 election after major pushback from political parties and civil society members. For the first five phases of the election, the EC had released only the percentages of votes polled in a constituency (of the total number of electors). On May 25, the EC released the data for the number of EVM votes polled in the first five phases, saying "any alteration in the number of

votes polled is not possible". Its press note also stated that the data did not include the number of postal ballots cast. A few days ago, when the chatter on X (formerly known as Twitter) began on deficits in the numbers of votes counted, Uttar Pradesh's Chief Electoral Officer said the commission's data may be reflecting a deficit in votes counted

Parliamentary constituency	Votes counted	Votes polled	Difference
Karimganj (Assam)	1,140,349	1,136,538	3,811
Mandla (Madhya Pradesh)	1,531,950	1,530,861	1,089
Ongole (Andhra Pradesh)	1,401,174	1,399,707	1,467

Table: Poonam Agarwal Created with [Datawrapper](#)
And here are the top three PCs where there was a deficit in the EVM votes counted.

Parliamentary constituency	Votes counted	Votes polled	Difference
Tiruvallur (Tamil Nadu)	1,413,947	1,430,738	-16,791
Kokrajhar (Assam)	1,229,546	1,240,306	-10,760
Dhenkanal (Odisha)	1,184,033	1,193,460	-9,427

Table: Poonam Agarwal Created with [Datawrapper](#)

because in some cases, the votes polled at certain polling stations are not counted "as per the extant protocol issued by the commission and provided in various manuals and handbooks".

He further stated that "the polling stations whose votes polled are not counted are of two categories":

"(1) Where the Presiding Officer by mistake fails to clear the Mock Poll data from the Control Unit before starting the actual poll or he fails to remove Mock Poll slips from the VVPAT before starting the actual poll.

(2) The total votes polled in the Control Unit does not match the record of votes in Form 17-C prepared by the Presiding Officer and who records [an] incorrect number by mistake. The votes of above two categories of polling stations are counted towards the end of the counting only in the case if [the] sum total of votes polled in all such polling stations is

equal to or greater than the margin between the first and the second candidate. If it is lower than the margin then the votes are not counted at all and therefore there arises a difference between total votes polled by EVMs and votes counted."

But the EC has not issued any clarification on how more or surplus votes were counted in more than 150 PCs. How did more votes get registered in the EVMs magically after polling was over?

The EC's explanation for why the number of EVM votes counted may have been less

than the number of EVM votes cast is not completely satisfactory either, but before that, consider these four PCs where the winning margins were very slim.

First, in Mumbai North West in Maharashtra, 951,580 EVM votes were polled, but 951,582 EVM votes were counted, i.e. two surplus votes were counted. The Shiv Sena's Ravindra Dattaram Waikar secured the lowest victory margin of a mere 48 votes, defeating Shiv Sena (UBT) candidate Amol Gajanan.

Second, in Jaipur Rural in Rajasthan, 1,238,818 EVM votes were polled but 1,237,966 EVM votes were counted, i.e. 852 votes weren't counted. The BJP's Rao Rajendra Singh won the seat with a slim margin of 1,615 votes.

Third, in Kanker in Chhattisgarh, 1,261,103 EVM votes were polled but 1,260,153 EVM votes were counted, i.e. 950 votes weren't counted. The BJP's Bhrojraj Nag won the seat with a slim margin of 1,884 votes.

Fourth, in Farrukhabad in Uttar Pradesh, 1,032,244 EVM votes were polled but 1,031,784 EVM votes were counted, i.e. 460 votes weren't counted. The BJP's Mukesh Rajput won the seat with a margin of 2,678 votes.

The victory margins are

on page 7...

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